

MAKING THE SELECTION

Potential residents or their guardians should not sign an admission agreement until all their questions have been answered and they feel satisfied with their choice. Unless it is an emergency, a nursing home should never be chosen only because it has an opening.

Before making your final choice, read each nursing home's admission agreement. Look carefully for the following information:

- Daily rates and what is covered (e.g., laundry);
- Billing procedures;
- Charges for items and services not covered in the daily rate;
- Charges for items not covered by Medicare or Medicaid;
- Pharmacy charges;
- Policies on notification of rate changes;
- Bed-hold policy and rate;
- Resident rights and responsibilities;
- Policies regarding "house rules" (e.g., visitation policy, banking hours, church service hours, etc.);
- Policies regarding resident transfers or discharges;
- Policies for handling resident account funds;
- Policies on advance directives (e.g., living will or a power of attorney for health care) and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
- Personal items the residents are allowed to bring with them (furniture, televisions, pictures); and
- Storage space allowed for each resident.

Look over the notes you took during your visits to the nursing homes. Which have best met your needs and desires? If you are helping someone choose a home, talk about each step of the process with him or her. This step is essential to good decision-making.

Once the decision is made, you can begin to make admission preparations. Make sure the nursing home knows about the person's care needs, interests and preferences, and tells you about the types of services that will be provided for the potential resident.

Be prepared to provide the nursing home with the following information about the person:

- Social Security number;
- Basic financial information (e.g., savings and checking accounts, or other liquidable assets);
- Medicaid number (if eligible);
- Medicare Supplemental A and B coverage (if eligible);
- Health insurance;
- Long term care insurance; and
- Advance directives (e.g., living will or decisions activated by a power of attorney for health care).

Persons diagnosed with a mental illness or developmental disability who need nursing home care require pre-admission screening and county approval. The screening determines the appropriateness of nursing home care and whether special services are required for these individuals. For more information about pre-admission screening, call the Provider Regulation and Quality Improvement Section Health Services Specialist at 608-266-6646.